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Dakotas AER Conference: Movement, Mobility, & More

Orientation & Mobility for DeafBlind

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A Little About ME

- NSU graduate in Special Education/Visual Impairment
- High School Special Education Teacher
- Orientation and Mobility degree - University of Northern Colorado, 2000
- Master's degree in Low Vision Rehabilitation - Pennsylvania College of Optometry (Salus University), 2004
- Endorsed in Cortical Vision Impairment (CVI) in 2019
- 27 years SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired as an Outreach Vision Consultant, Low Vision Specialist (CLVT®) and Orientation and Mobility Instructor (COMS®)
- South Dakota DeafBlind Project Director, USD Sanford School of Medicine, Center for Disabilities, SD DeafBlind Program since August 2021

Learning Objectives



- Describe how DeafBlindness impacts orientation and mobility
- Preparing the environment for learning
- Understand how an effective travel routine can support a student's practice of O&M skills
- Tips for adult/teen travelers who are deafblind

DeafBlind Students



- The combined effects of the vision and hearing loss create a barrier that significantly impedes the ability to gather information from the environment. This can lead to a lack of access to **incidental** learning and delayed or fragmented concept development. Students cannot learn what they do not detect, and they may be unaware of what they are missing.

Movement

- Movement is the underlying skill upon which all other skills are built, but limited vision and hearing in children who are deafblind may inhibit natural curiosity and the motivation to explore and learn from their surroundings. They need environments, learning opportunities, and instruction that encourage and support movement.

Early Intervention



- For an infant, toddler, or young child orientation goals may be focused on:
- developing an understanding of one's own body
- learning to reach and grasp
- learning to anticipate activities in specific locations
- learning to sequence landmarks and objects
- learning about shapes

Motivation to Move



- Creating a feeling of safety
- Identifying sensory preferences-likes and dislikes
- Exploring the world *with* the student using hand-under-hand techniques
- Communication - where they are going and why – always tell them
- Routines- goal directed and more opportunities
- Fun – repeat movements that are fun!
- Responsive environments – Create spaces for active exploration and allow time to become familiar

Preparing the Environment



- *Environments that promote communication and learning for children who are deafblind are structured to encourage movement, engagement, and interactions with others.*
- They consist of physical places and the people, activities, and materials within them.
- Physical spaces that are accessible, including modifications to auditory and visual conditions that maximize the use of any residual hearing and vision
- People who are respectful and responsive
- Consistency and predictability
- Interesting (including tactually interesting) materials and activities

Visual Environment

- Preferential Seating
- Lighting
- Reduced Glare
- Contrast
- Sufficient Workspace
- Opportunities to use touch
- Accommodations for students with cortical visual impairment (CVI)

Opportunities to Touch



- It is well understood that students who are *totally blind* must have opportunities to access their surroundings through touch.
- Sometimes people assume, however, that students who have *partial vision* do not rely on touch. This is not true.
- Students with low vision use touch, in combination with whatever residual vision they have, to gather information.
- Be sure to give the student plenty of time to gather information via touch.
- The student may need hand-under-hand support and/or verbal descriptions

Accommodations for Auditory



- Preferential seating is important for hearing as well as vision.
- Avoid placing the student near sources of noise such as:
 - fans
 - heaters
 - open windows near traffic-filled streets

Other simple accommodations to absorb sound and reduce ambient noise include:

- Pillows in a reading corner or child-sized upholstered chairs
- Tennis balls on chair legs and soft pillows on the seats
- Hang fabric Curtains or draped across ceilings
- Padded room dividers
- Sound-absorbing materials such as rugs and carpeting
- If your budget allows, you may also want to consider unobtrusive acoustic panels for walls and ceilings

Environmental Sound Considerations



A student with deafblindness must learn to detect, discriminate, and identify environmental sounds

- Discrimination
- Identification
- Localization
- Auditory Landmark, Cues, and Clues
- Echolocation
- Distinguishing Sound Sources
- Recognizing Sound Shadows
- Recognizing Sound Masking
- Localizing Sounds

Engaging Environments

- Predictable - Consistency
- Organized – Schedule, Space, Materials

Video - routine



Inclusion

- O&M skills and routines are *inclusion skills* and directly relate to a child's quality of life at home, school, and in the community.
- A student learns to connect to the world through the people they are working with (interveners) and can develop skills through travel routines

Access to Mailbox



Routine



- Purpose and Meaningful
- Beginning, middle, and end
- Where and why – use of calendar system
- Object, activity, and location – see video next slide
- Travel calendars (first, then, next)

Video – use of objects in Routine



It Takes a Team!

- Families
- Audiologist
- OM
- Intervener
- Interpreter
- Teacher of Deaf and the Hard of Hearing
- Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments
- Extended team of OT, PT, Speech



Travel Tips for Teens and Adults who are DeafBlind



- Be prepared and organized
- Find a place to cross where you can hear/see the traffic better, and/or where you are more visible

Get Help To Cross Streets



- Face the street
- Look like you want help (use a card, gestures, voice, etc.)
- From neighbors/shopkeepers
- From drivers

Communicate Effectively



- Assume others don't understand the situation and don't know what to do. Explain exactly what you want the other person to do and repeat if needed
- Know your needs – be specific – what do you need, how do you want them to help, how to get their attention and communicate with them
- Recognize when communication is/isn't working – “tap me if you can help”, move the clip on the card to answer, use of technology –texting or Marco Polo app
- Explain to them First – what you want
- Second – what they can do to help
- Third – your vision/hearing impairment

APH DeafBlind Communicator



Increase the Likelihood That Drivers Will Yield / Stop



- Carry a white cane
- Cross where drivers are going more slowly and can see you better, and/or, are more likely to expect pedestrians to cross
- Make yourself more visible, for example at night wear bright reflective clothes, use a flashlight, etc.

Avoid Crossing Streets



- Use rides and taxis, bus/paratransit, etc.,
- Shop online or have home delivery

Know your rights



- Only you know what is best
- Know when you need help and what type of help is needed
- If help is offered and you are unsure or its not needed be confident in your refusal, if you do accept help make sure you are taking their arm to allow you to be in control.
- Do not let them take your arm



Consumer / Client Choice

- Individuals that have low vision, blind, or DeafBlind should always have options and choice
- One tool does not fit everyone
- One tool does not fit every situation
- Ask questions, ask for assistance, attend trainings, get involved and be an advocate

Resources

- TSBVI DeafBlind Project <https://txdeafblindproject.org/orientation-and-mobility/about-sound-travels/>
- NCDB https://www.nationaldb.org/media/doc/Orientation-and-Mobility_a.pdf
- Active Learning Space <https://activelearningspace.org/motor-skills/>

- DAK AER CODE - OMDB

Evaluation
Link



https://southdakota.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_41MZtSNDwKJZ3Ui

Thanks for Coming

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